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Identical letters dated 20 June 2012 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, I transmit herewith the position of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic regarding paragraphs 2 to 6 of the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) for the period 1 January to 30 June 2012 (S/2012/403).

— Security is the principal and fundamental concern underlying all of the correspondence between the leadership of UNDOF and the truce delegation during the period under consideration. The situation required a rapid response on the part of the Syrian side, as well as better policing of the area of separation in order to ensure a calm environment for everyone located in the area, including UNDOF. Such measures are incumbent on the Syrian side under the Agreement on Disengagement and under paragraph 12 of the chairman's statement as agreed by the parties on 5 June 1974.

— Paragraph 4 of the report states that 230 armed Syrian security personnel or soldiers of the armed forces entered the area of separation. That number is incorrect. On that date, the concerned parties received intelligence regarding the presence of armed saboteurs, rather than "anti-Government protesters" as stated in the report. One piece of evidence is that armed masked men prevented the inspection team from fulfilling its functions on 7 May 2012 in area F. Police and law enforcement forces were therefore sent in order to cleanse the area of terrorists. The leadership of UNDOF was contacted through the liaison officer, Major Abdussalam al-Khawarzati. It was informed that saboteurs were present, and permission was requested for local police and law enforcement officers to enter the area of separation through points 30-32. The counter-terrorism battalion provided the personnel with helmets and bullet-proof equipment, which they did not have, as well as personal weapons. That information can be verified from the pictures taken by United Nations forces. On 3 March 2012, UNDOF command was informed that some of the vehicles used were non-military vehicles belonging to the civil defence agency under the Ministry of Local Government, which are used for civilian purposes and in emergencies. United Nations forces did not prevent local police and law enforcement officers from entering the area of separation; the leadership of UNDOF had itself agreed to their entry by letter DOF/FC/050/12 of 6 March 2012.

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— Paragraph 2 incorrectly states that the Syrian authorities prevented UNDOF from inspecting or entering Shaqra, Harra, Jaseem, Kanakir, Namir, Nawa and Tasil. What happened was the very opposite: the Syrian authorities have continued to attempt to facilitate the work of UNDOF and allow the liaison officer of the truce delegation office to travel wherever necessary, except for certain rare cases in some regions where the security situation is inadequate or subject to occasional tension. Most of the inspection teams fulfilled their functions without being prevented from doing so, except for some long-standing routine objections from both sides. That much can be ascertained from the results of the inspection, which have reached the Syrian side and the United Nations.

— Contrasting accounts have been given regarding the gunfire incident of 5 March 2012 mentioned in the report of the Secretary-General. The most plausible is that no shots were fired, as no tangible evidence was provided to the Syrian delegation on the truce committee, except for the idea that a laser beam was involved, rather than a tracer as mentioned by some members of the United Nations Truce Supervisory Organization.

— The report states that gunshots were fired at United Nations observers on 12 March 2012. The information in the possession of the Syrian side is that the shots came from inside Jordanian territory. That information was confirmed by UNDOF by letter 12/B/1074 of 14 March 2012 addressed to the truce delegation, and is borne out by the local coordinates that were sent to the Syrian side.

(*Signed*) Bashar **Ja'afari**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative